



Third Quarter, 2000
Volume 1, Issue 3

Welcome to the VINELINE!

This is the official newsletter of the Department of Corrections VINE Program and we hope to make it a valuable and much-used source of information for Crime Victims and those who help them.

We want this newsletter to grow in a direction which will better help you, the victim's first line of support, and with your input and feedback, we will.

We invite you to send letters, essays, questions, suggestions, and other matters that you feel would benefit the Victim Support community. We invite suggestions regarding the content and format of future editions.

This is your newsletter, so let us know what you think.

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To request additional copies of this Newsletter, please contact us at:

The Department of Corrections
Division of Administrative Services
Vine Program
2439 Lawrenceburg Road
P.O. Box 2400
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-2400
Phone: 502-564-5061

Email: corco.vine@mail.state.ky.us

VINE LINE

Mission of the VINE Program Unit

**Stephen C. Evans, Administrator
VINE Program Unit**

As many of you know, the VINE Program is funded statewide by the Kentucky Department of Corrections. To insure that the system works properly for the citizens of the Commonwealth and to insure compliance with KRS 196.280, the Department of Corrections formed the VINE Program Unit in December, 1999. The mission of the unit is threefold: 1) Data Verification 2) Promotion 3) DOC Statistical Data.

In the past six months the unit has visited over eighteen jails and other institutions across the state to verify data and assist with any problems concerning VINE data. The Department of Corrections is not concerned with which booking system a jail prefers to utilize, but is concerned that all systems provide the data required by the KRS. We wish to express our thanks to those jails we have visited, not only for their friendly reception of us, but also for the outstanding quality of their data entry. Each jail we have visited has excellent input of data.

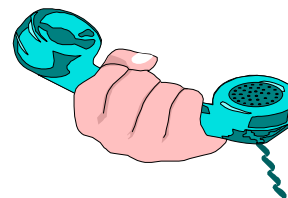
While visiting jails in each county, we make a specific effort to visit and provide VINE promotional items to the local Victim Advocate organizations in that same county. The Victim Advocate is often the first line of defense for victims of crime. We are making a special effort to recognize their work by highlighting stories in our newsletter the VINELINE each quarter.

The third mission of the VINE Program Unit is to provide the Department of Corrections with statistical data for all prisons, jails, juvenile detention centers and mental health facilities holding violent offenders placed there for evaluation. The source of the statistical reports is from data gathered by the VINE Company. Keep in mind, the VINE Company is under contract with the Department of Corrections to gather data and make calls to victims as an offender's status changes.

The VINE Program Unit will continue to visit prisons, jails, juvenile detention centers and selected mental health facilities. We shall also continue our efforts to visit Victim Advocates across the Commonwealth. Verification of the data input to the VINE Company is the key to the success of the entire system. Not all of us are computer experts but we know that if you put garbage in you will get garbage out.

Again congratulations to all the institutions we have visited to date. Staff at all of those locations should be commended for their outstanding work. Data entry will continue to be important as the...

VINE continues to grow.



Our Goal Is...

**To Proactively address, as a team,
the need to protect victim's rights to be safe.**

**To ensure complete and accurate information
in order that victims may stay informed.**

To promote statewide awareness of the VINE Program.

CALENDAR

Details of the event:

Name: Crimes Against Women & Children
Location: Kentucky International Convention Center Louisville, Kentucky
Date: October 10-12, 2000
Contact: Dianne Samwaru or Renee Brown 502-582-5911

Name: National Conference on Health Care and Domestic Violence
Location: San Francisco, California
Date: October 13-14
Contact: 415-252-8900 or <http://www.fvpf.org/health/conference.html>

Name: Kentucky Violence Against Women Conference
Location: Holiday Inn North Lexington
Date: November 14, 2000
Contact: For information, contact 502-226-2704.

Internet Sites of Interest... .

United States Department of Justice/Office for Victims of Crime – “OVC administers the Crime Victims Fund authorized by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). OVC administers five grant programs to help crime victims, i.e., crime victim compensation, crime victim assistance, national scope training and technical assistance and demonstration programs, the children’s justice and assistance act, and services to federal crime victims.” <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/>

Criminal Justice Legal Foundation – “Nonprofit law organization promotes a balance between the rights of crime victims and the criminally accused. Read about cases and publications.” <http://www.cjlf.org/>

Nat'l Criminal Justice Reference Service – “Nat'l Criminal Justice Reference Service outlines its resources for crime victims. Find a directory of related services and organizations.” <http://ncjrs.org/victhome.htm>

The National Center for Victims of Crime – “Center provides victims of crime with information and resources on legal and professional assistance. Also offered are safety tips and strategies, literature regarding victims of crime and organization membership information.” <http://www.nvc.org/>

The Global Corrections Resource - “Jail.net is looking for a Law Enforcement Professional from this state to help with updating State Information and keeping up with State Training dates.” <http://www.jail.net/KY/>

Kentucky Justice Cabinet – “The Justice Cabinet is presently headed by a Secretary and is structured to provide the citizens of the Commonwealth a safe, secure environment in which to live, work and raise their families.” <http://www.jus.state.ky.us/>

Kentucky Department of Corrections – “The Department of Corrections is responsible for managing the daily operations of the state correctional institutions and a variety of community-based services.” <http://www.cor.state.ky.us/>

Corrections Connection – “Find news about jail administration and learn more about this professional association for jail employees.” <http://www.corrections.com>

Victim’s Advocacy – “Kentucky Attorney General site with links to aid crime victim advocates and victims. Excellent listing of national toll free telephone numbers.” <http://www.law.state.ky.us/victims/Default.htm>

Advocates Touching The Lives of Victims

By Dave Stengel
Jefferson County Commonwealth Attorney

I salute the work that the Victim Advocates do throughout the state. I thought it might be enlightening to see what a normal day is for one of the six advocates in Jefferson County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. They deal with 40 prosecutors, 13 Circuit Judges located throughout fourth floors of the Judicial Center, handling almost 4500 felony indictments a year. As an example, on today's date, August 22, 2000, there are 155 Court appearances scheduled for our prosecutors.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

A "normal" day in my work as a Victim Advocate starts as I arrive to work at 8.00 a.m.,

to find multiple telephone messages to return, a box full of new files and assignments from Prosecutors (some marked "A.S.A.P."), then grab my briefcase and hurry over to the Courthouse for six pre-trials being held between 8.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m., in different divisions with three Different Prosecutors.

Although the victims in these cases may not appear, I attend each hearing to be sure that if they are present, an Advocate is available to provide support and to answer any questions they may have regarding the proceedings, i.e., "Why is it being continued again"...; "Why did they lower his bond"...; "What does competency mean" etc. Victims may be frustrated or placed in fear as a result of the Court's rulings, so I try to help them to understand the process and develop a safety plan if the assist defendant is being released. If the victim is not able to appear or has been excused from hearing, I contact them to give them the details of what happened in Court. If they cannot be reached, I assist the prosecutor in finding a new address or contact phone number so they may subpoenaed to the next Court date.

If an uncooperative or recanting victim appears at the hearing, I use this opportunity to try to speak with her. I assist the prosecutor by gathering as many details as possible regarding what happened and /or



Left to right: Nichole Frame, Amy Garrison, Kathy Armstrong and Laura Shaughnessy. Not pictured, Kim Sampson and Sally Fangman

serving a subpoena on her for the next Court date. She may be angry at our office for prosecuting the defendant and react with rudeness or hostility toward me.

As I go back and forth between courtrooms, the Judges, Sheriffs, and defense attorneys call upon me to locate Prosecutors. I let them know if the prosecutor is tied up in another division and then go to locate them or page them to that division. The Prosecutors also look for me if I am in the Courthouse to provide them with blank subpoenas, blank no contact orders, and other urgently needed Court forms. Between things, if I am not waiting with a victim, I use the empty victim rooms to check and return messages. I also contact the victims in our new cases to provide referrals and schedule appointments for them to come in and with the prosecutor and myself. A new file may come in with little information about the victim, which requires me to assist the Prosecutor in trying to identify the victim (call to find out the current guardian's name, etc.) or locate the victim if she has moved from the home or is in a shelter.

Witness interviews must be scheduled around three prosecutor's schedules, my calendar, and the witness's ability to come to our office, which can be difficult at times. Sometimes, it is required that we schedule appointments with doctors and injured victims at the hospitals, children at school, witnesses at the jail, or victims/witnesses at home if they do not have transportation. To accommodate the victim, we often conduct interviews after regular business hours.

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All in a Day's Work (Continued from page 3)

These same witnesses may require that I provide transportation to court. I also pick up experts at the airport. This can be tricky when we are coordinating witnesses' appearances at trial with work schedules and travel arrangements.

At noon, I look at my calendar and confirm that there is a sentencing scheduled for 1:00 p.m. and an appointment set for a victim interview later that afternoon. I go to the courtroom a little early to make sure that someone from our office is there when the victim arrives. While we wait for the sentencing hearing to begin I must be watchful that there are no confrontations between the parties on opposite sides and must often separate witnesses in waiting rooms on different floors. No matter the outcome of a trial or sentencing, the victim will have strong reactions. If a defendant is not found guilty, the victim often expresses anger and hostility. Even if the victim feels like the prosecution won a victory in the case, the reality of the crime and the loss experienced quickly returns. The Victim Advocate must be prepared to handle either reaction, provide support, and possibly even seek the sheriff's help in diffusing the situation between parties.

At 4.20 p.m. I receive word that a plea agreement has been reached in a case scheduled for trial the next day, so I start to contact the victim and witnesses to explain about the plea agreement and let them know they are required to come to court the next morning. This sometimes means I have to continue trying to reach witnesses throughout the evening from my home.

If a Victim Advocate calls in sick, the other Victim Advocates and I must divide her work. We must notify the prosecutors of the change and deal with all of the already mentioned issues with the aggravating factor that now my schedule has multiple overlaps and I am dealing with unfamiliar victims and witnesses who require extra time and assurances that I will be "as good" as the other Victim Advocate. Valium, unfortunately, is not an option.

Throughout my day, I must remain mindful of my role as a Victim Advocate; I must give the victim my attention, be empathetic to her experience and/or express sympathy for her loss, while providing emotional support she needs to make it through the prosecution process. I must make sure each victim is kept informed about the prosecution of her case and is provided with answers to her questions during what can be a very confusing process. I must make sure she is given the appropriate referrals for her and her children, and has been provided information regarding the VINE program, Crime Victim's Compensation, Kids in Court along with other programs and resources available to her family.

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2439 Lawrenceburg Road, Box 2400
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED